



DC
COMICS™

THE DARK KNIGHT RISES™

IN THEATERS
AND IMAX®
JULY 20

10

THE SUNBELT

JAMES
ROBINSON
FRAZER
IRVING

HOW TO
TORTURE
AN IMMORTAL!

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SEP 2012



DC
COMICS™

THE DARK KNIGHT RISES™

IN THEATERS
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JULY 20

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THE SUMMER

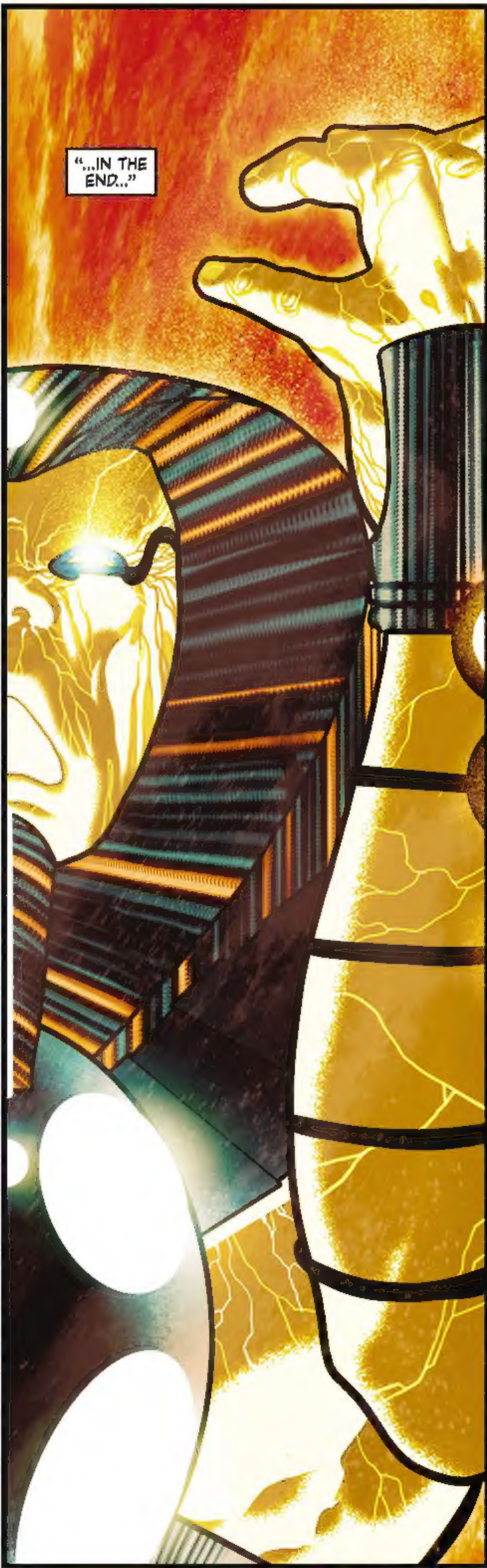


JAMES
ROBINSON
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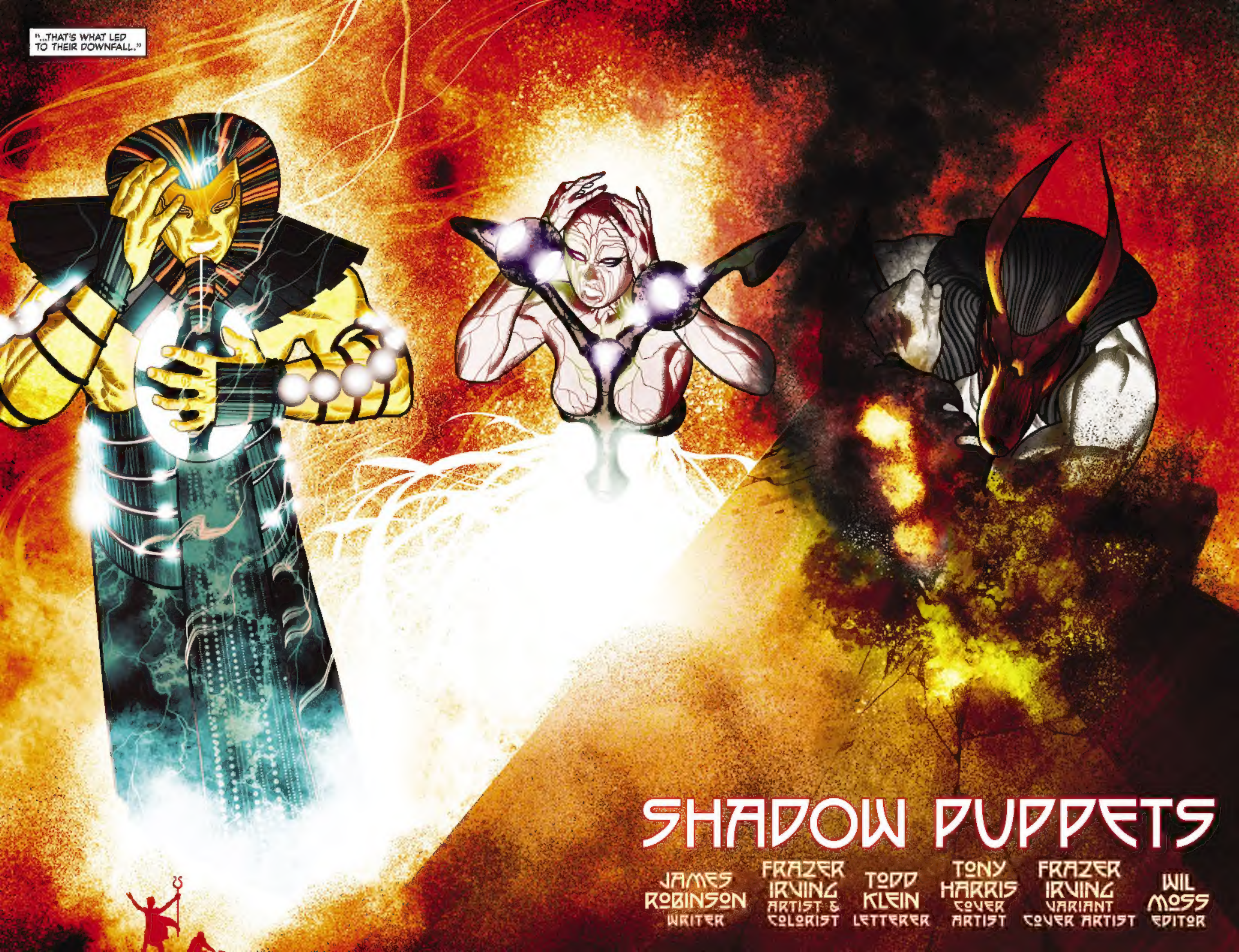
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"...THAT'S WHAT LED
TO THEIR DOWNFALL."



SHADOW PUPPETS

JAMES
ROBINSON
WRITER

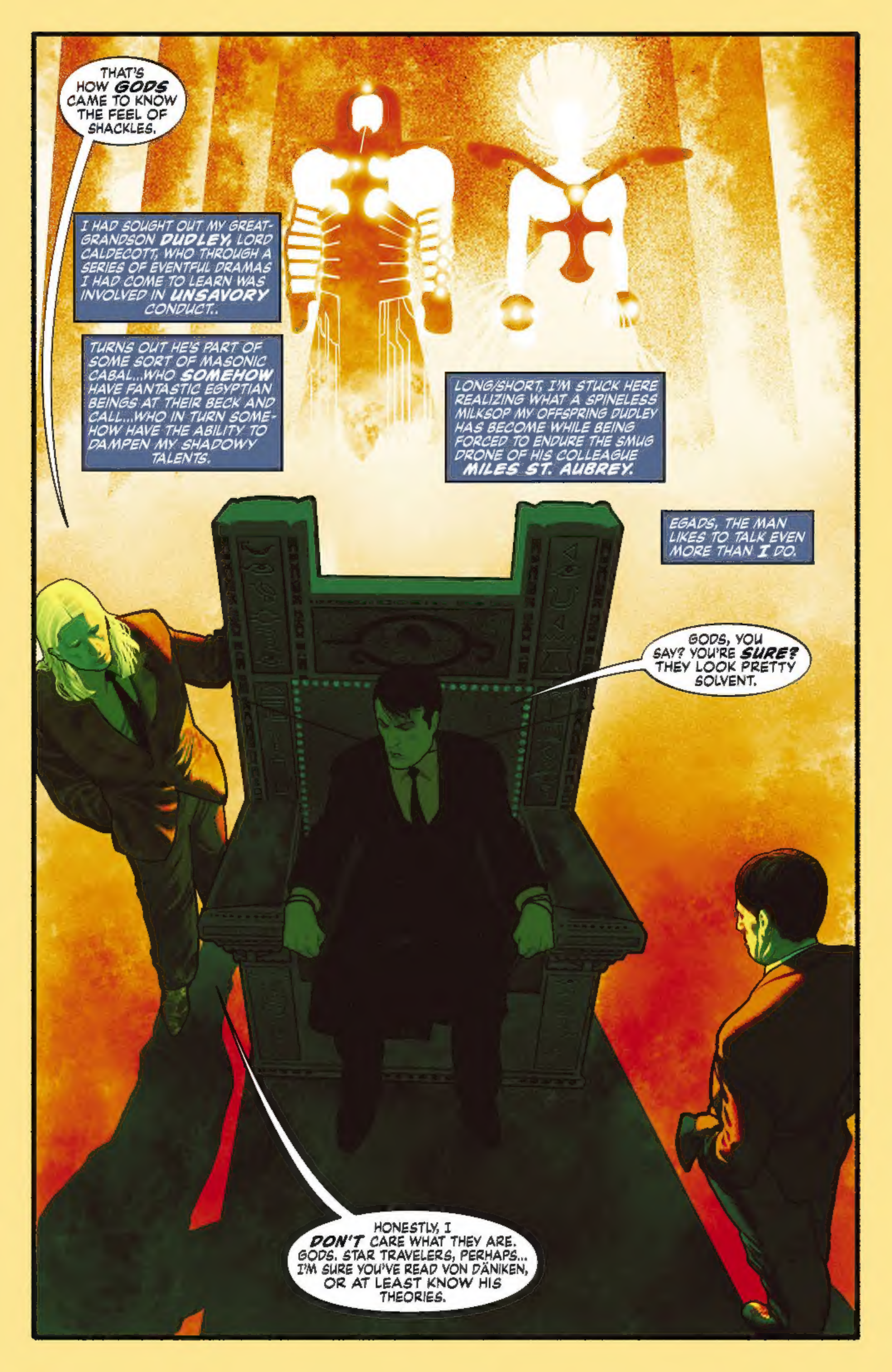
FRAZER
IRVING
ARTIST &
COLORIST

TODD
KLEIN
LETTERER

TONY
HARRIS
COVER
ARTIST

FRAZER
IRVING
VARIANT
COVER ARTIST

WIL
MOSS
EDITOR



THAT'S
HOW **GODS**
CAME TO KNOW
THE FEEL OF
SHACKLES.

I HAD SOUGHT OUT MY GREAT-GRANDSON **DUDLEY**, LORD CALDECOTT, WHO THROUGH A SERIES OF EVENTFUL DRAMAS I HAD COME TO LEARN WAS INVOLVED IN **UNSAVORY** CONDUCT..

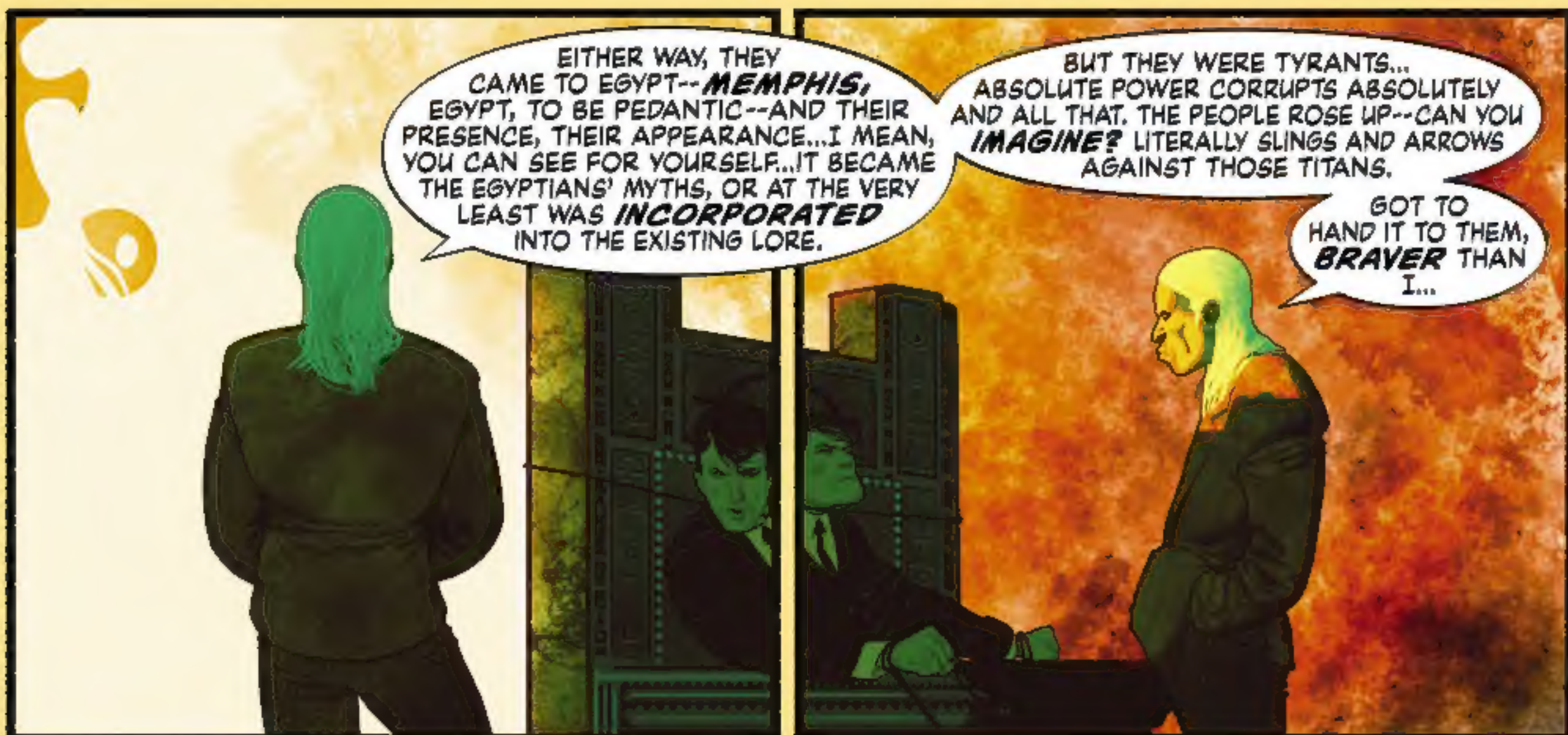
TURNS OUT HE'S PART OF SOME SORT OF MASONIC CABAL...WHO **SOMEHOW** HAVE FANTASTIC EGYPTIAN BEINGS AT THEIR BECK AND CALL...WHO IN TURN SOMEHOW HAVE THE ABILITY TO DAMPEN MY SHADOWY TALENTS.

LONG/SHORT, I'M STUCK HERE REALIZING WHAT A SPINELESS MILKSOP MY OFFSPRING DUDLEY HAS BECOME WHILE BEING FORCED TO ENDURE THE SMUG DRONE OF HIS COLLEAGUE **MILES ST. AUBREY**.

EGADS, THE MAN
LIKES TO TALK EVEN
MORE THAN I DO.

GODS, YOU
SAY? YOU'RE **SURE?**
THEY LOOK PRETTY
SOLVENT.

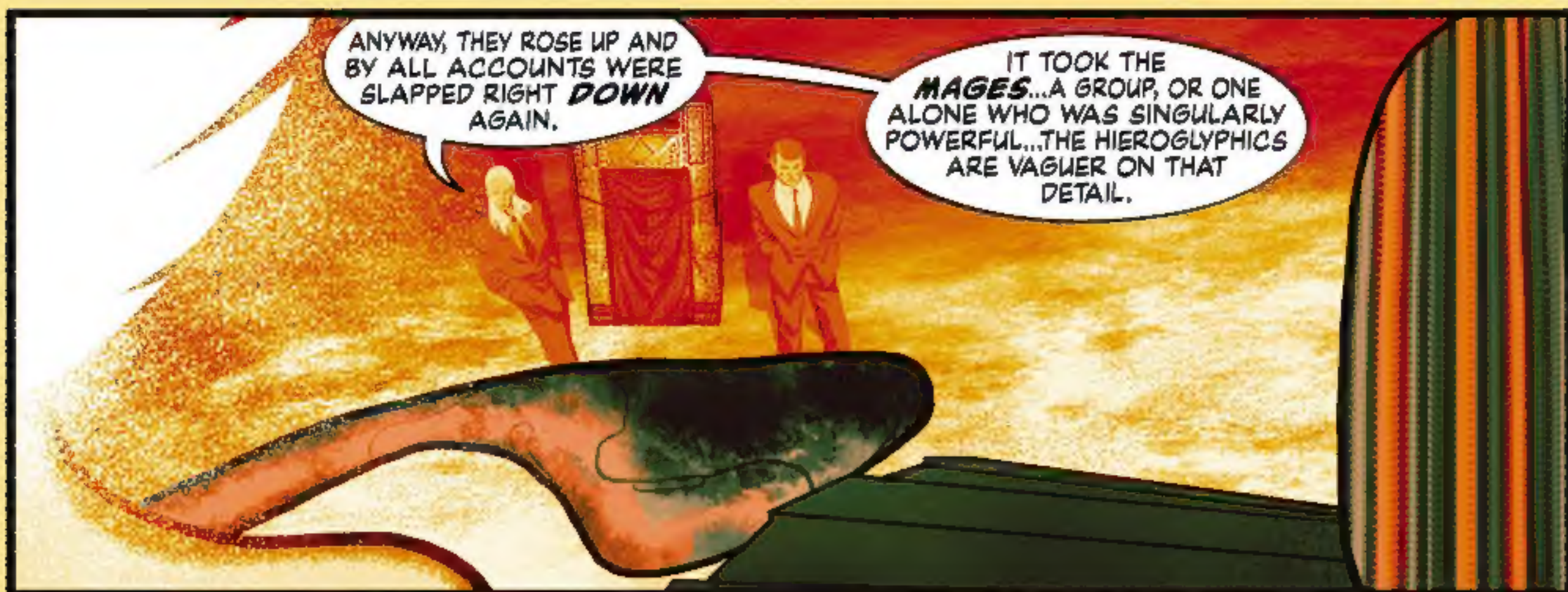
HONESTLY, I
DON'T CARE WHAT THEY ARE.
GODS. STAR TRAVELERS, PERHAPS...
I'M SURE YOU'VE READ VON DÄNIKEN,
OR AT LEAST KNOW HIS
THEORIES.



EITHER WAY, THEY CAME TO EGYPT--**MEMPHIS**, EGYPT, TO BE PEDANTIC--AND THEIR PRESENCE, THEIR APPEARANCE...I MEAN, YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF...IT BECAME THE EGYPTIANS' MYTHS, OR AT THE VERY LEAST WAS **INCORPORATED** INTO THE EXISTING LORE.

BUT THEY WERE TYRANTS... ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY AND ALL THAT. THE PEOPLE ROSE UP--CAN YOU **IMAGINE?** LITERALLY SLINGS AND ARROWS AGAINST THOSE TITANS.

GOT TO HAND IT TO THEM, **BRAVER** THAN I...



ANYWAY, THEY ROSE UP AND BY ALL ACCOUNTS WERE SLAPPED RIGHT **DOWN** AGAIN.

IT TOOK THE **MAGES**...A GROUP, OR ONE ALONE WHO WAS SINGULARLY POWERFUL...THE HIEROGLYPHICS ARE VAGUER ON THAT DETAIL.



FASCINATING.

ISN'T IT?

NO.

THE GODS WERE DEFEATED. THEN LATER ON, I ASSUME YOU GOT HOLD OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY'RE BEING CONTROLLED...AND HERE WE ARE. THE **ONLY** THING THAT DOES INTEREST ME IS HOW I'M **UNABLE** TO USE MY OWN ABILITIES.



WHY, IT'S **THEM** OF COURSE. I MEAN, **LOOK** AT THEM--ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

AND FROM WHERE I'M STANDING, I'D SAY **ALL** YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT THEY CAN.

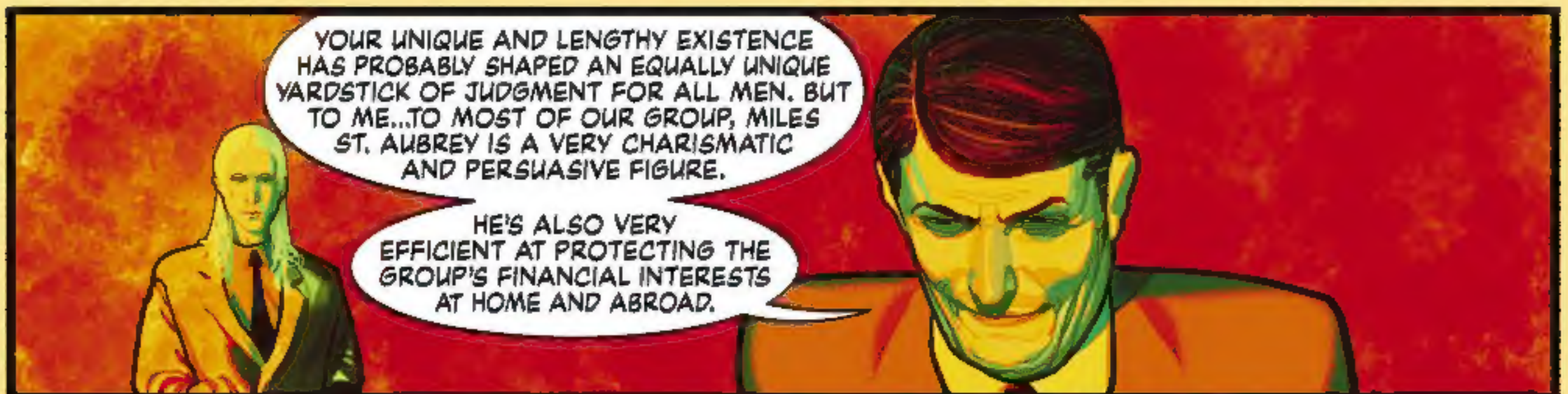


AH, SO YOU'VE FOUND YOUR TONGUE, DUDLEY. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU'D SWALLOWED IT.

ME? NO, NOT AT ALL. IN FACT, LET'S EXCHANGE SOME ACCORD... OR LACK THEREOF BEFORE YOU'RE CONSIDERED TO WHAT-EVER FATE MILES DEEMS APPROPRIATE.



"WHATEVER FATE MILES DEEMS"? HOW MUCH THE LEADER--**YOUR** LEADER--IS HE? YOU'RE LORD CALDECOTT, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE. HE'S...WHAT?...JUST SOME JUMPED-UP POMPOUS **ASS**, FROM WHAT I CAN TELL.



YOUR UNIQUE AND LENGTHY EXISTENCE HAS PROBABLY SHAPED AN EQUALLY UNIQUE YARDSTICK OF JUDGMENT FOR ALL MEN. BUT TO ME...TO MOST OF OUR GROUP, MILES ST. AUBREY IS A VERY CHARISMATIC AND PERSUASIVE FIGURE.

HE'S ALSO VERY EFFICIENT AT PROTECTING THE GROUP'S FINANCIAL INTERESTS AT HOME AND ABROAD.



GROUP? YOUR GROUP, DOES IT HAVE A NAME, AT LEAST?



NO. IT'S JUST "THE GROUP." WE VALUE **ANONYMITY** OVER THEATRICS.



YES, NOTHING THEATRIC-- APART FROM RITES AND NINJAS AND SECRET ENTRYWAYS AND BIG EGYPTIAN GODS.



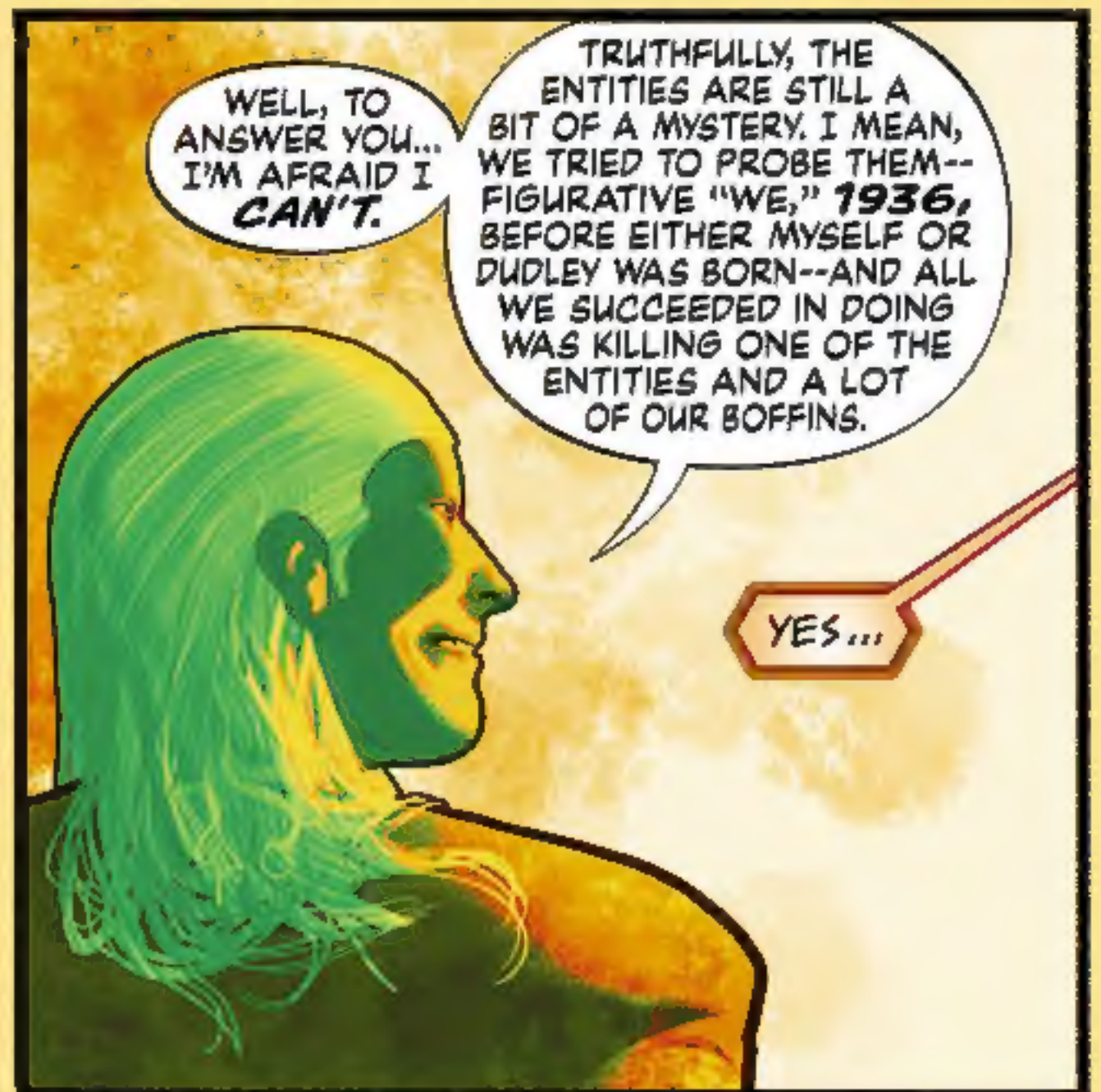
YOU HAVE A POINT.



AND OF COURSE, IT'S **OBVIOUS** THEY'RE WHAT ARE STUNTING MY ABILITIES. NO, I MEANT **HOW** ARE THEY DOING IT? I HAVE TO ADMIT I'M USED TO BEING INVINCIBLE IN THAT REGARD, SO--

YES, THE MIGHTY, MYSTERIOUS SHADE HELPLESS. MUST BE A SHOCK.

A SURPRISE. SHOCK? NO, THAT **RARELY** HAPPENS.



WELL, TO ANSWER YOU... I'M AFRAID I **CAN'T**.

TRUTHFULLY, THE ENTITIES ARE STILL A BIT OF A MYSTERY. I MEAN, WE TRIED TO PROBE THEM-- FIGURATIVE "WE," **1936**, BEFORE EITHER MYSELF OR DUDLEY WAS BORN--AND ALL WE SUCCEEDED IN DOING WAS KILLING ONE OF THE ENTITIES AND A LOT OF OUR BOFFINS.

YES...



...MY
HUSBAND
IS DEAD.



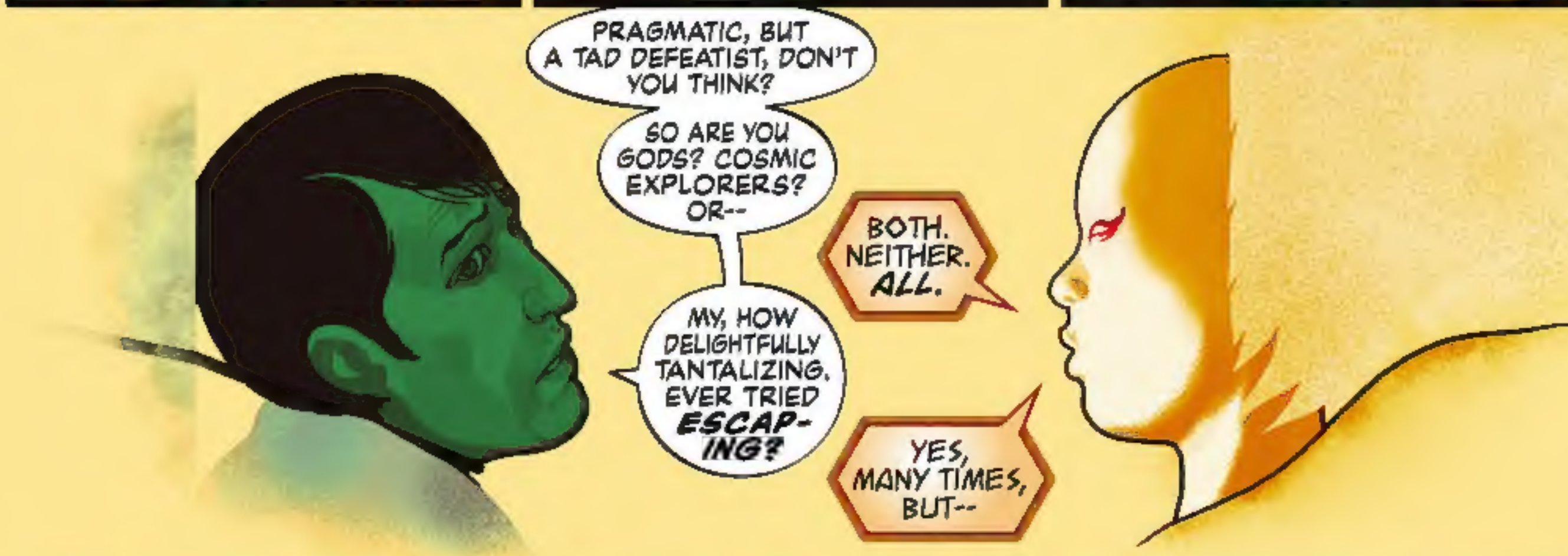
HEAVENS, I
EAT MY WORDS. THAT
DID SHOCK ME.

HELLO, MY
DEAR, DON'T YOU LOOK
NICE. SO WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?



I AM
NHUT, THIS
IS **THON**.

AND TO
OUR SHAME
WE ARE NOW
BUT VASSALS
WHERE WE
ONCE
RULED.



PRAGMATIC, BUT
A TAD DEFEATIST, DON'T
YOU THINK?

SO ARE YOU
GODS? COSMIC
EXPLORERS?
OR--

MY, HOW
DELIGHTFULLY
TANTALIZING.
EVER TRIED
ESCAP-
ING?

BOTH.
NEITHER.
ALL.

YES,
MANY TIMES,
BUT--

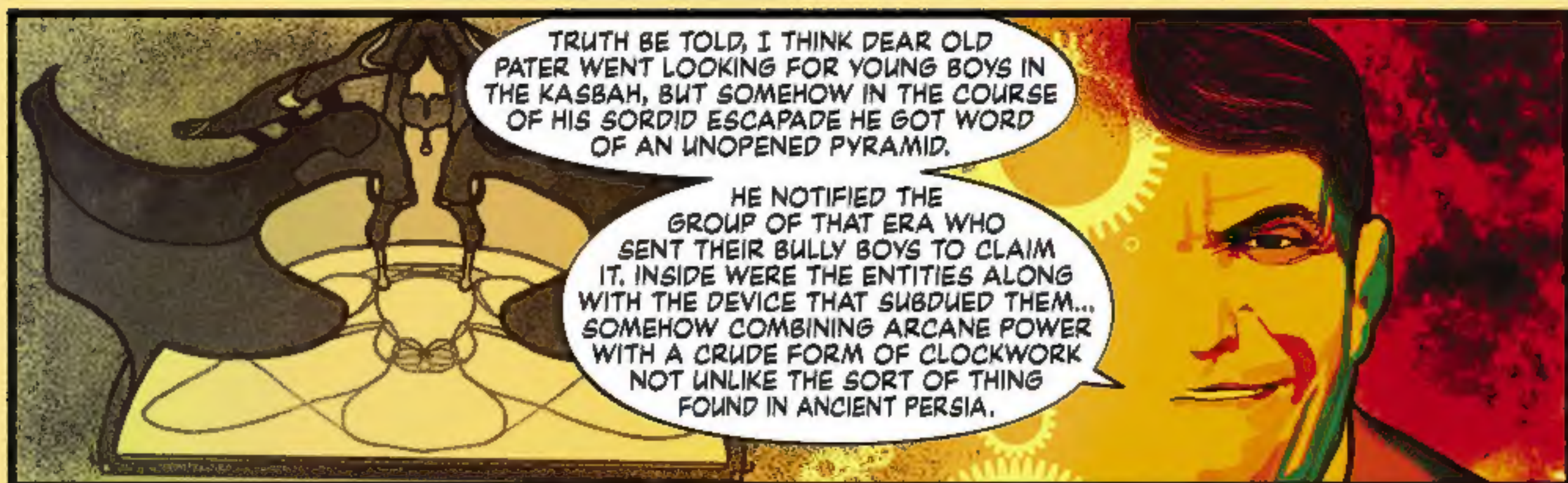


EXCUSE ME.
EXCUSE ME. I AM
THE ONE HOLDING COURT
HERE. I **DIDN'T** SAY
YOU TWO COULD
CHITCHAT.



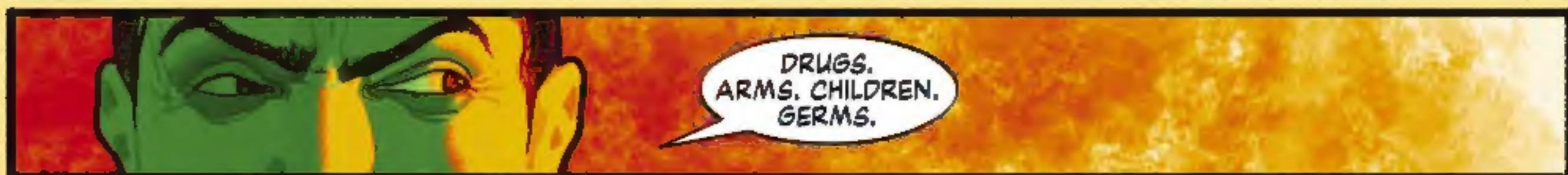
THANKFULLY, THIS
IS ENGLAND AND NOT THE
WEIMAR REPUBLIC. YOU'RE A
TERRIBLE **BORE**, BY THE WAY,
AUBREY. HAS ANYONE
TOLD YOU THAT?

AUBREY,
SIR. THE NAME IS
ST. AUBREY.





DRUGS.



DRUGS.
ARMS. CHILDREN.
GERMS.



DUDLEY,
IN **GOD'S**
NAME!



OH, SHOCKED AGAIN? TWICE
NOW? LET'S HAVE A GO AT A HAT
TRICK, SHALL WE, DUDLEY? WHAT
DO YOU SAY?

ARMS SALES ARE DOWN
BECAUSE TERRORISM'S BEEN
ON A SLIGHT DECLINE OF LATE.
WE THOUGHT THAT SHOULD
CHANGE. WE HAVE A DEAL
WITH SOME ALGERIANS
IN FRANCE--

THEY'RE DRUG
DEALERS, SO THEY'RE
CERTAINLY IN IT FOR THE
HEROIN WE'RE SUPPLYING
THEM, BUT THEY COULD
BELIEVE IN A CAUSE,
TOO--THESE THINGS
CAN BE GRAY.

NOT THAT I CARE, NOT
THAT ANYONE IN THE GROUP
GIVES A DAMN. SUFFICE IT TO
SAY, THE WORLD WILL BE
REAWAKENED TO THE
THREAT OF TERRORISM
SOON.



SOON?
WHEN
SOON?



TODAY.
THREE O'CLOCK
TODAY. **LES**
INVALIDES.

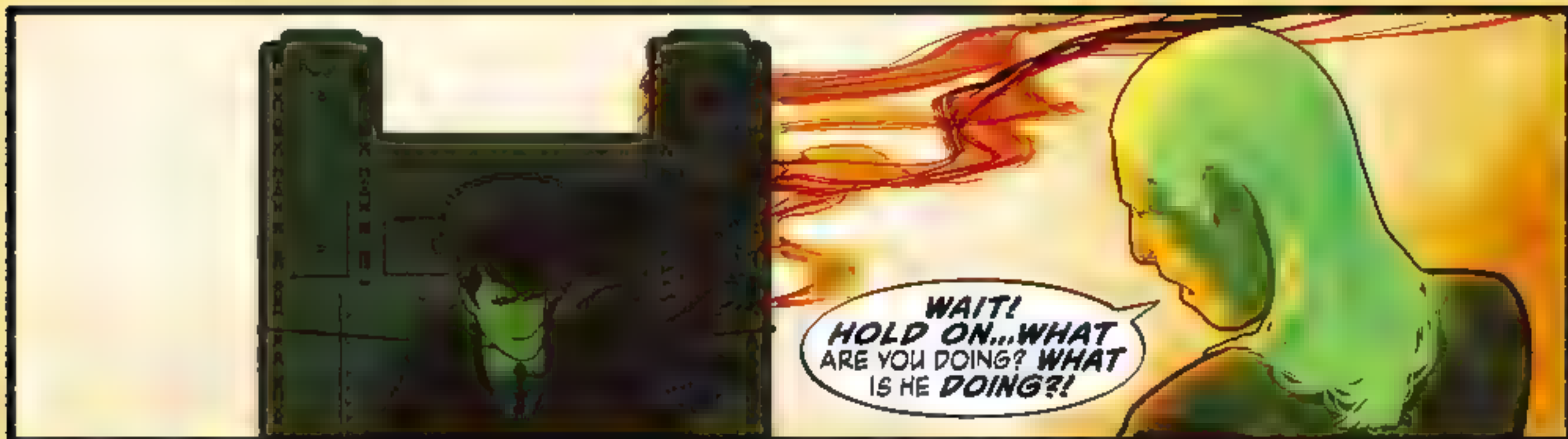
TOO LITTLE
AND A TAD TOO
LATE FOR YOU,
I'D SAY.



YOU
THINK SO? HMM.
IF THERE'S BUT ONE
REAL **TRUTH** I'VE
LEARNED...



...IT'S
THAT IT'S
NEVER
TOO
LATE.



WAIT!
HOLD ON...WHAT
ARE YOU DOING? WHAT
IS HE DOING?!



THON!
HOW CAN HE DO
THAT...FADING?
STOP HIM!

HIS
POWER.
IT IS TOO
GREAT.

AS THE
MOMENTS PASS,
IT SURPASSES OURS.
WE NEED **MORE** OF
OUR OWN ENERGY
RETURNED TO
US.



MORE.
YES.

CARMICHAEL!



SIR.

CEDE THEIR
POWER! JUST A
LITTLE THOUGH,
YOU HEAR ME?



SO **THAT'S**
THE DEVICE DUDLEY
MENTIONED, EH?

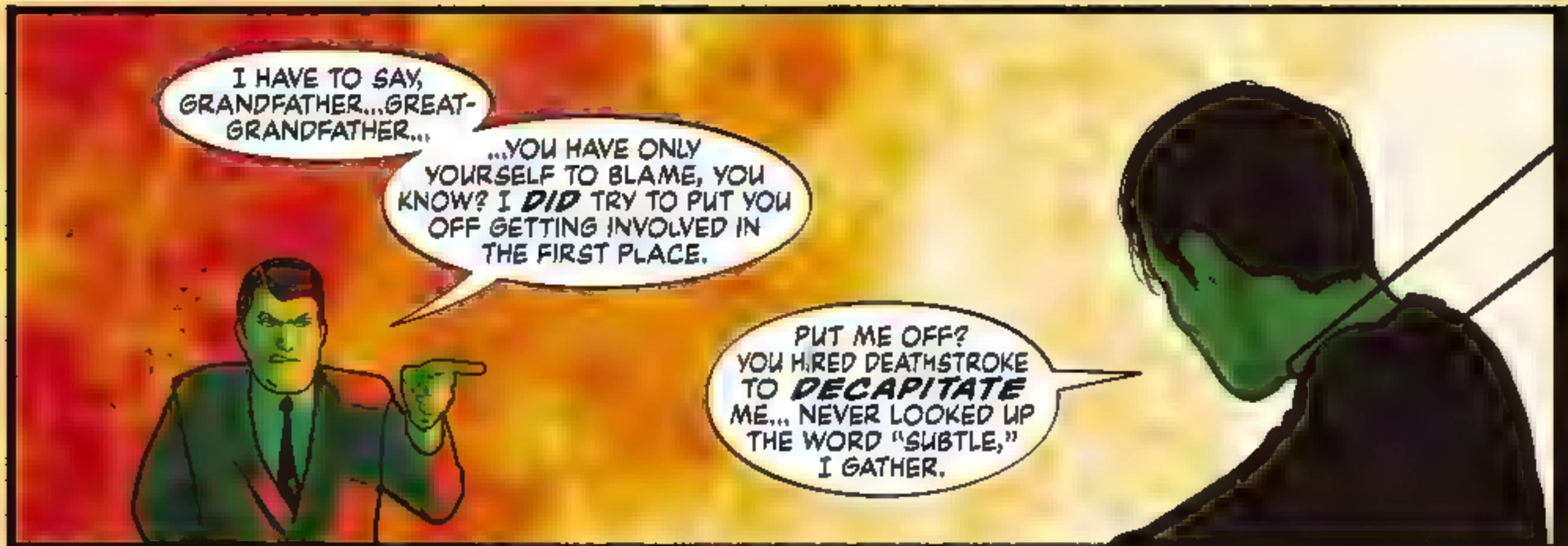
I'D HOPED
THIS STUNT MIGHT
AFFORD ME A GLIMPSE
OF IT.



THE **LITTLE** GOOD THAT IT DOES YOU!



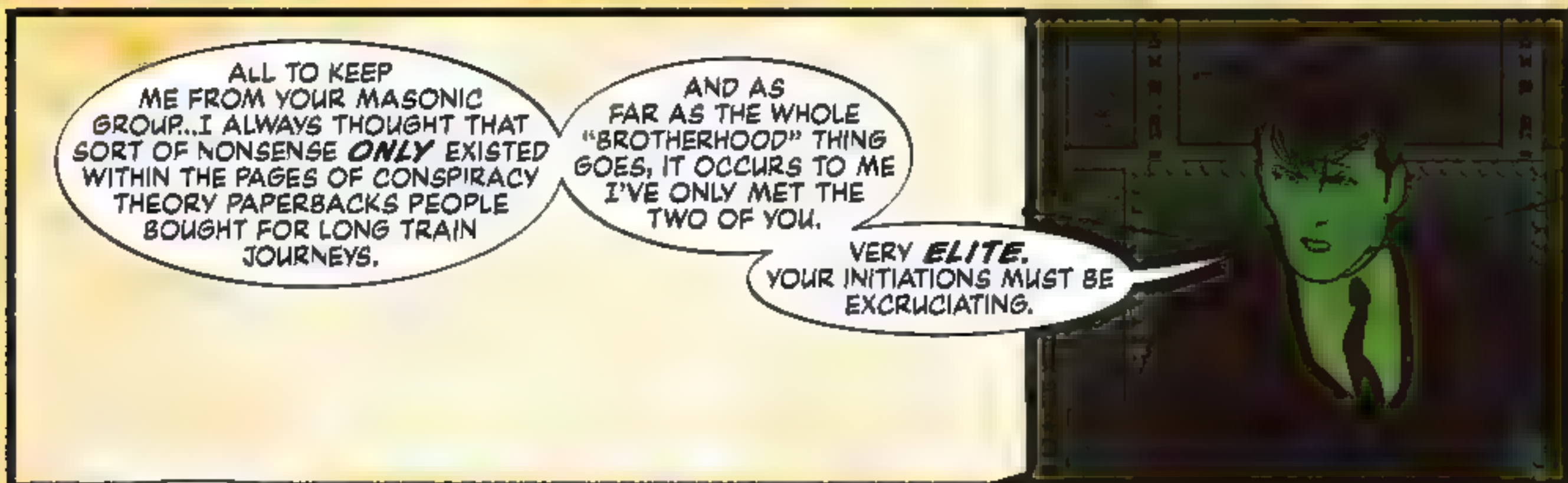
TEMPER.



I HAVE TO SAY, GRANDFATHER...GREAT-GRANDFATHER...

...YOU HAVE ONLY YOURSELF TO BLAME, YOU KNOW? I **DID** TRY TO PUT YOU OFF GETTING INVOLVED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

PUT ME OFF? YOU HIRED DEATHSTROKE TO **DECAPITATE** ME... NEVER LOOKED UP THE WORD "SUBTLE," I GATHER.



ALL TO KEEP ME FROM YOUR MASONIC GROUP...I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT SORT OF NONSENSE **ONLY** EXISTED WITHIN THE PAGES OF CONSPIRACY THEORY PAPERBACKS PEOPLE BOUGHT FOR LONG TRAIN JOURNEYS.

AND AS FAR AS THE WHOLE "BROTHERHOOD" THING GOES, IT OCCURS TO ME I'VE ONLY MET THE TWO OF YOU.

VERY **ELITE**. YOUR INITIATIONS MUST BE EXCRUCIATING.

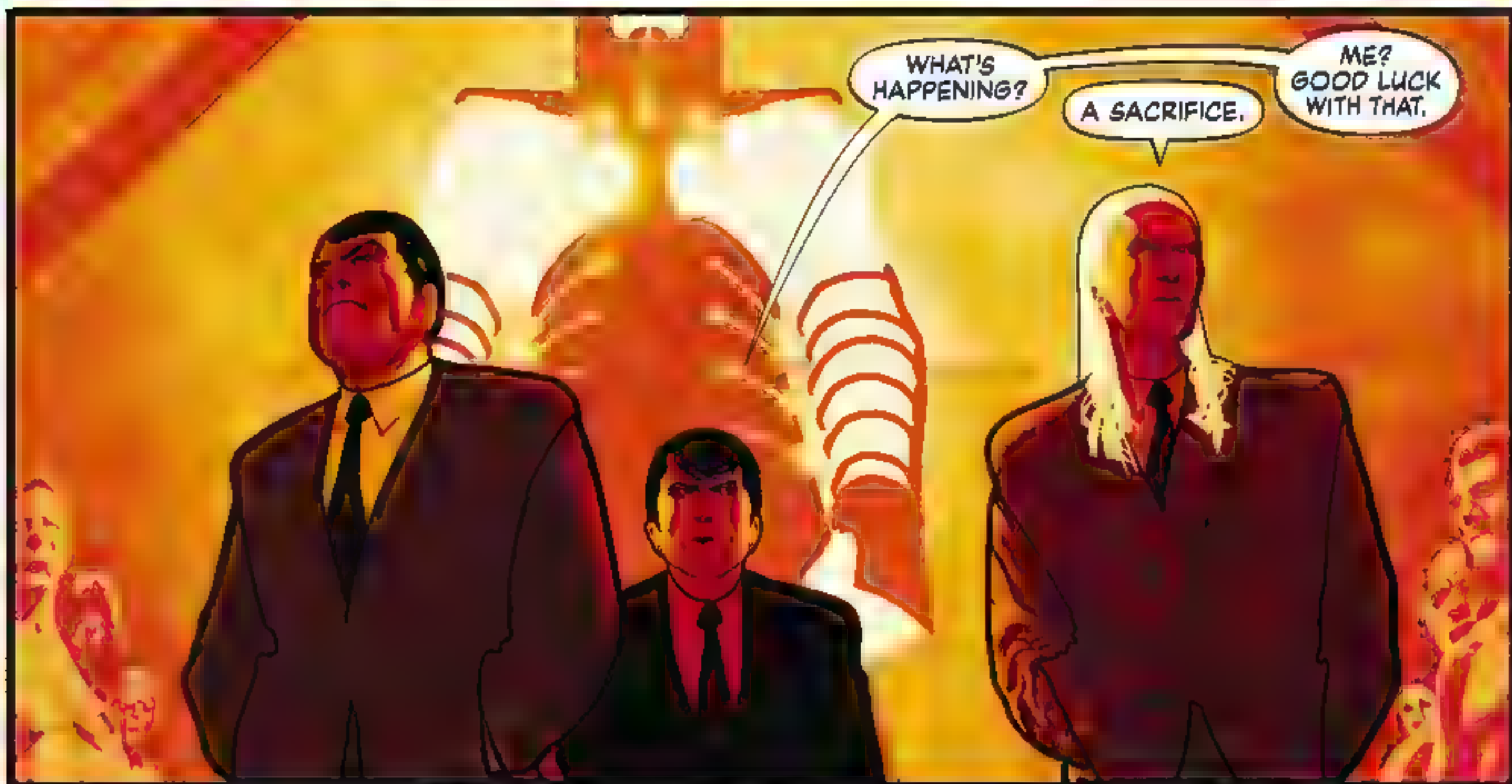


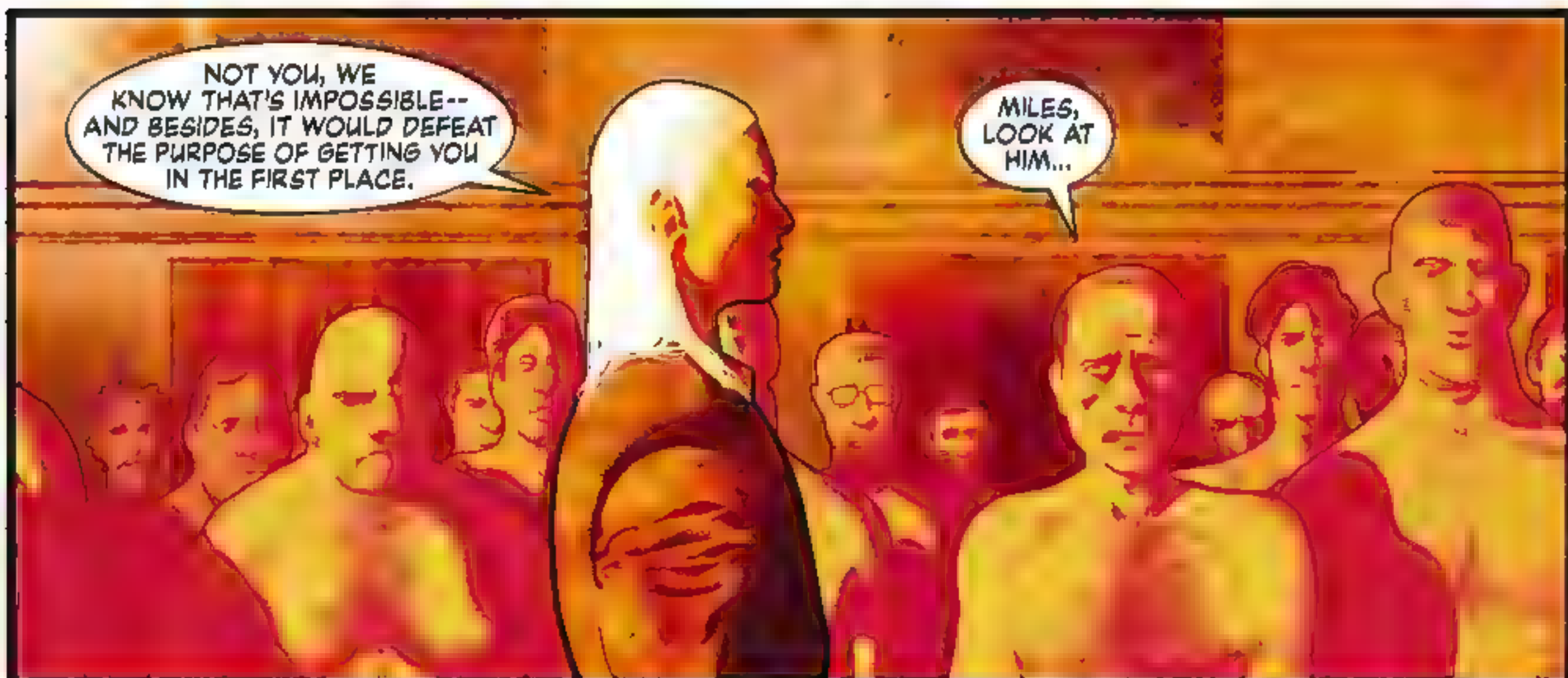
IF YOU MUST KNOW, WE HAVE AMONG OUR NUMBER SOME OF THE MOST **RENOWNED** NAMES IN INDUSTRY AND PEERAGE.

AS YOU WILL SOON DISCOVER.

AND WHEN WILL THAT BE?

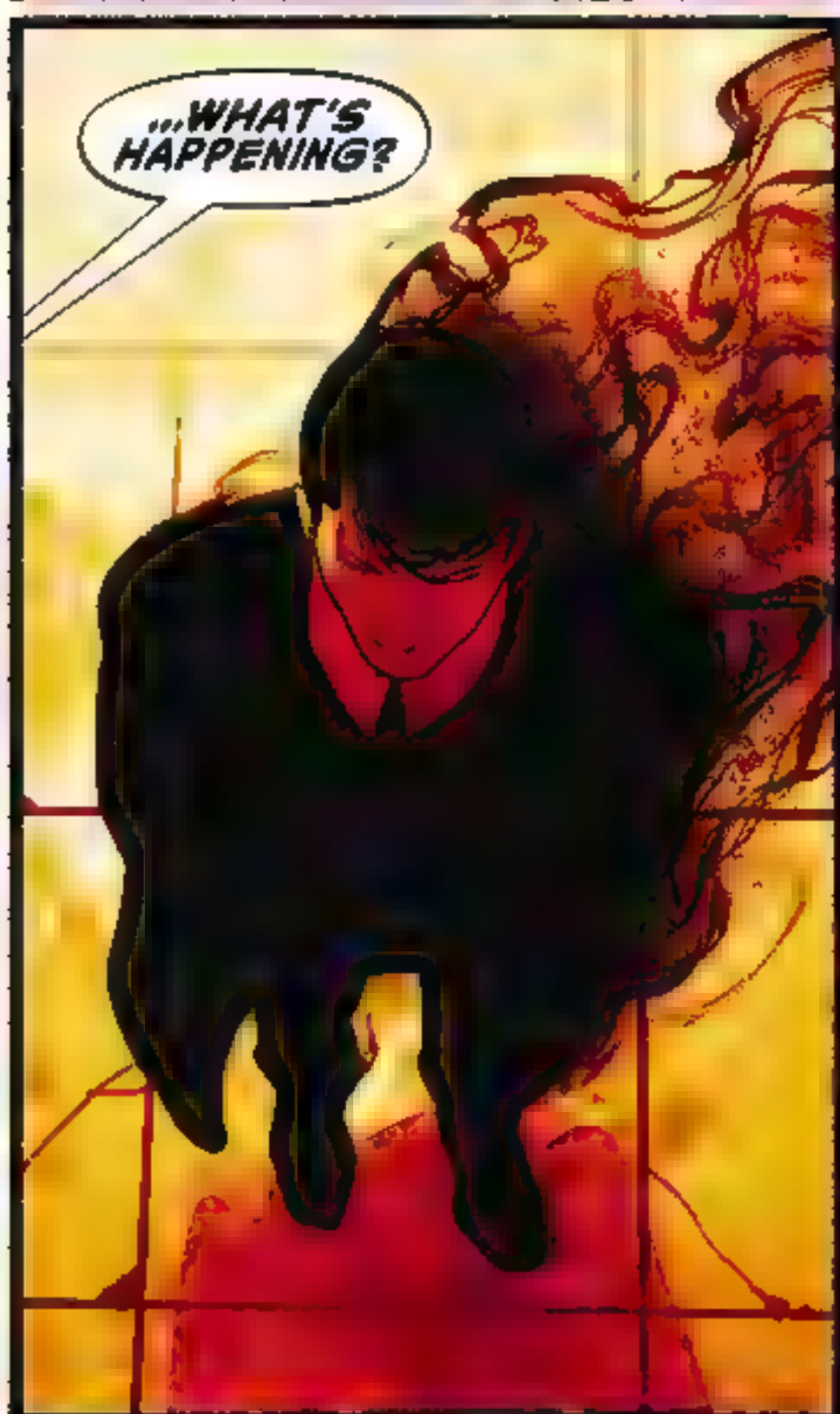
QUITE SOON, ACTUALLY. YES, IF GROUPS SUCH AS OURS HAVE **ONE** THING IN COMMON...





NOT YOU, WE KNOW THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- AND BESIDES, IT WOULD DEFEAT THE PURPOSE OF GETTING YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE.

MILES, LOOK AT HIM...



...WHAT'S HAPPENING?



CARMICHAEL, I'LL CUT OUT YOUR EYES MYSELF IF YOU LET THIS HAPPEN AGAIN. **MORE POWER!**...



...THE GODS!... GIVE THEM WHAT THEY **NEED** OR WE'LL **LOSE** THIS SNEAKY **BASTARD!**



LOSE ME? WITH ALL THE MALE NUDITY IN EVIDENCE, I'M SCARED TO ASK WHAT YOU'LL DO IF YOU **KEEP** ME.



DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF, YOU'LL BE **TESTED**, OF COURSE. YOUR **IMMORTALITY**... OBVIOUSLY YOU SEE HOW THAT COULD BE DESIRABLE TO US IF IT CAN BE REPLICATED.



AND THEN THERE'S YOUR SHADOW POWER. WE'LL HAVE SCIENTISTS ON **ALL** OF IT BY TEATIME.

BUT FIRST
WE BAPTIZE THE
NEW ENDEAVOR. OUR
ACQUISITION--YOU--
WITH THE BLOOD OF
AN INNOCENT.

ALTHOUGH
THIS ONE'S BEEN ON
THE STREET FOR A WHILE,
SO "INNOCENT" IS
PROBABLY A RELATIVE
TERM.

IT'S ONLY
SYMBOLIC,
AFTER ALL.



DUDLEY, PLEASE
DON'T TAKE HER
LIFE.

I'M NOT
WITHOUT MY
MURDEROUS SIDE, BUT
EVEN I LIKE TO THINK
THAT NO DEATH I'VE
CAUSED HAS BEEN
NEEDLESS.

GREAT-
GRANDFATHER,
I'M SORRY HOW
THINGS ARE.

BUT
THEY
ARE.

MILES!



...HE'S
STARTING TO
FADE!

AGAIN?



**MORE
POWER! GIVE
THE GODS MORE
POWER!**

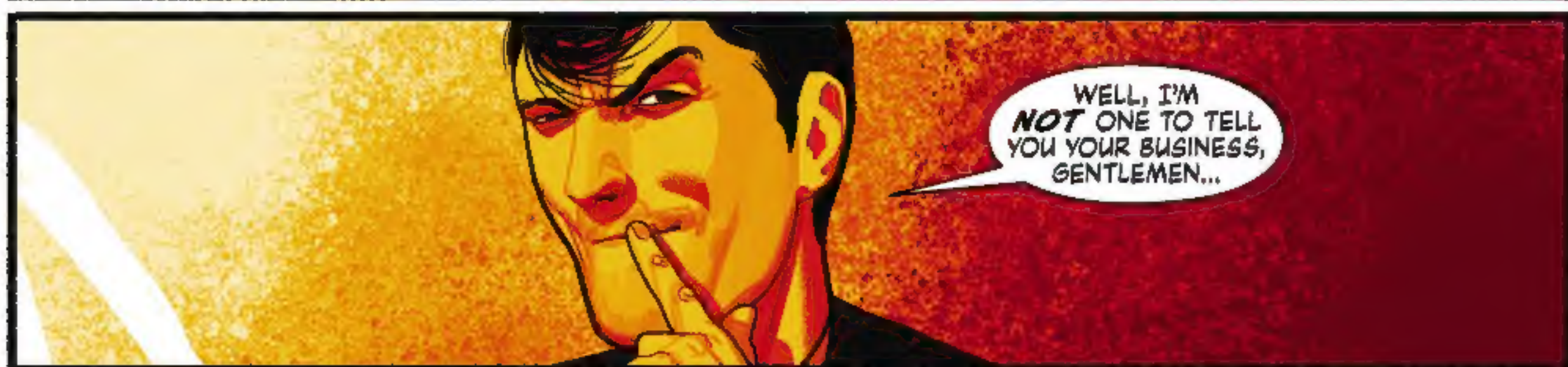


SIGH



SUDDENLY
I'VE A FEELING
YOU'LL MOMENTARILY
HAVE **MORE** THAN
ME TO CONCERN
YOU.

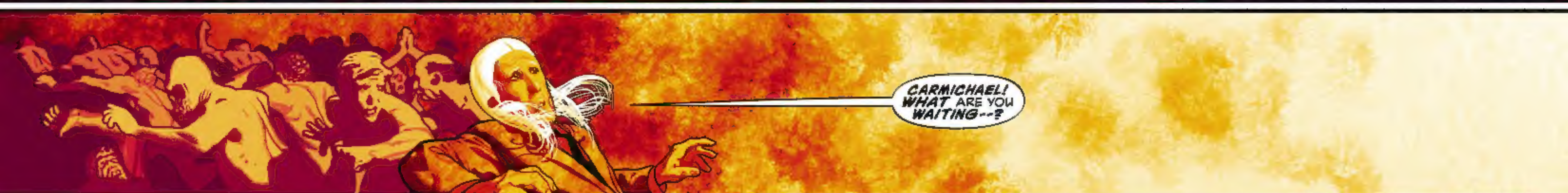
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



WELL, I'M
NOT ONE TO TELL
YOU YOUR BUSINESS,
GENTLEMEN...



...BUT IS
GIVING THE GODS
BACK THAT WHICH
WAS TAKEN THE
SMARTEST
MOVE?



CARMICHAEL!
WHAT ARE YOU
WAITING--?





